

Faculty of Music University of Toronto
FACULTY RECITAL SERIES
&
CBC STEREO'S ARTS NATIONAL

**ANTONIN
KUBALEK**
piano

25th Anniversary Concert



Friday, January 29, 1993
8pm
Walter Hall

PROGRAMME

Vzponínky/Memories, Op. 6

Vítězslav Novák
(1870-1949)

Triste: Andante sostenuto
Inquieto: Allegro agitato
Amoroso: Lento con tenerezza

Sonata IV

Walter Buczynski
(1930)

Fantasia I
Scherzo I
Fantasia II
Adagio
Scherzo II
Finale

****INTERMISSION****

V Mlhách/ In the Mist

Leoš Janáček
(1854-1928)

Andante
Molto adagio
Andantino
Presto

Sonata in C, Op.1

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Allegro
Andante
Scherzo: Allegro molto e con fuoco
Finale: Allegro con fuoco

PROGRAMME NOTES

Tonight's concert has special significance, for it honours the fact that 1993 is Antonín Kubálek's twenty-fifth year as a resident of Canada. When he arrived from his native Czechoslovakia in November of 1968, Kubálek lost little time in establishing himself as a performer. A press conference arranged by Keith MacMillan of the Canadian Music Centre led to his North American debut, October 24, 1969, in a joint recital with the bassoonist and composer Rudolf Komorous. That concert was a joint production of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music and the CMC, and like tonight's concert, it took place in Walter Hall. Since then, Kubálek's many recordings, CBC broadcasts and his frequent performances both as a recitalist and a chamber musician have brought him recognition as one of Canada's most distinguished pianists.

Asked about his accomplishments in the 25 years he has lived in Canada, Kubálek says that he feels fortunate to have built a recording career, for that is something which is not available to many fine performers. "Thanks to certain 'lucky stars' I have been able to record with people like Glenn Gould... I took a chance (in leaving Czechoslovakia) and I have never regretted it."

The works which Kubálek has chosen tonight reflect the somewhat commemorative nature of the concert. "There's an element of nostalgia in the program," he says. "The piece by Vítězslav Novák, *Memories*, was a piece which I played in my very first public recital, when I was 17, and I have never played it since. This will probably be a Canadian premiere." Kubálek describes the piece as "music with its heart on its sleeve." Regarding the final "Amoroso", he adds: "Novák and Josef Suk knew each other and studied composition together under Dvořák. When Suk wrote his *Song of Love* (recorded by Kubálek on his Dorian CD "Czech Miniature Masterpieces"), it became a sort of competition to see which of them could write the better love song."

"The other Czech composition on tonight's program, Leoš Janáček's *In the Mist*, was one of the pieces performed in Kubálek's North American debut concert in 1969. "I thought that since it's a anniversary concert, I should play something that I played the first time" he says. Contrary to what one might expect from the title of the work, there is little about this music which is impressionistic. Instead, the work demonstrates Janáček's characteristic use of short, often choppy motives, and as Kubálek points out, the composer's indebtedness to Moravian folk song, which is especially apparent in the third movement.

Johannes Brahms' *Piano Sonata No. 1*, with its opening nod to Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" sonata, seems almost symphonic in conception, rather than pianistic. As Kubálek himself says, "Brahms has his own way of writing for the piano. He very seldom uses runs or scales; it's all chords. You may be able to play Liszt or Chopin with ease but your first encounter with Brahms will still be a challenge." Asked why he included this particular work on tonight's program, Kubálek replies with a laugh, "Because I have to record it soon! It's a magnificent piece of music, and it also makes a good closing number after the more introspective Janáček." The *Brahms Piano Sonata No. 1* will be part of Volume 3 of the complete solo piano music of Brahms to be recorded by Mr. Kubálek for Dorian. Volumes 1 and 2 are currently available on Dorian CD.

As one of the leading performers of contemporary Canadian music, it is fitting that Kubálek has included Walter Buczynski's *Piano Sonata IV* in his program for this evening. This sonata was commissioned by Kubálek under a grant from the Canada Council and is dedicated to Dorothy Sandler Glick. Buczynski, like Kubálek, teaches at the Toronto University's Faculty of Music. "The sonata was premiered at the Music Gallery," Kubálek says, "in a special concert of Buczynski. He is one of the best composers we have in Canada; definitely the best as far as writing for the piano is concerned. He is a very good pianist himself, and he knows what works and what doesn't work on the instrument."

Kubálek describes his commitment to the performance of new works as follows: "I was always interested in playing contemporary music, if for no other reason than that it's a moral duty of every performer to champion the music of his time. There are many compositions which deserve to be played, but few people pick up on them. In this regard the CBC has been very helpful in giving Canadian composers an opportunity to be heard," he says, adding succinctly, "The music has to prove itself, and it cannot prove itself if it is never played."

--Robert Kubica,
January 14, 1993

Antonin Kubálek was born in Libovice, Czechoslovakia on November 8, 1935. He began to study the piano at 10 years of age with Otakar Heindl in Prague and continued his studies to 1957 at the Prague Conservatory with Oldrich Kredba. From 1957 to 1959 he studied at the Academy of Music with Zdenek Jilek and Frantisek Maxián. Mr. Kubálek taught at the Prague Conservatory from 1961 to 1968 and during that time gave public and radio performances and recorded for Supraphon. He came to Canada in 1968 and made his North American debut at the Walter Hall, University of Toronto on October 24, 1969.

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Mr. Antonin Kubálek is represented by:
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...Upcoming Event...

The Faculty of Music University of Toronto
and

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present

The St. Lawrence String Quartet

with

Guest Violist

Terrence Helmer

Haydn: String Quartet in C major, No. 3, Op. 76

Schoenberg: String Quartet, No. 3, Op. 30

Mozart: String Quintet in G minor, K. 516

Sunday, February 21

2:30 pm -- Walter Hall--\$10/\$5 students/seniors

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